

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PM-05 NSC-05  
SP-02 SS-15 DODE-00 L-03 EB-08 HA-05 PA-01 /069 W  
-----065799 211630Z /50

R 182230Z AUG 78  
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7504  
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA  
SAN SALVADOR 2456  
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA  
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAGUA 3852

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINS, NU  
SUBJECT: AMB TALKS WITH POLITICAL FIGURES

REFS: (A) MANAGUA 3435, (B) MANAGUA 3599, (C) MANAGUA 3644,  
(D) MANAGUA 3520, (E) STATE 030739, (F) MANAGUA 0621

BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL

SUMMARY: IN RECENT DAYS, AMB HAS CONDUCTED WIDE RANGE OF  
DISCUSSIONS WITH PROMINENT POLITICAL FIGURES--BOTH FROM GON  
AND OPPOSITION--THREE CONVERSATIONS WERE REPORTED BELOW. END  
SUMMARY.

1. AMB MET WITH FRANCISCO ARGENAL PAPI, PROMINENT AND ACTIVE  
LEADER OF THE RULING PLAN AND DEPUTY IN CONGRESS, AT THE LATTER'S  
REQUEST. PAPI'S THESIS WAS THAT SOMOZA HAS RISKED HIS PRESIDENCY  
BY WANTING TO DEMOCRATIZE NICARAGUA. SOMOZA STILL HAS GREAT  
RESPECT FOR US AND WE SHOULD HELP BY INFLUENCING BOTH SIDES  
TOWARD MODERATION.

2. THE PLN HAS GROWN TIRED OF CURRENT SITUATION AND SOMOZA  
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HAS BEEN PERSUADED TO FOLLOW A MORE ACTIVE POLICY OF MOBILIZATION  
OF PARTY LEADERS, VISITS TO LOCAL PARTY ORGANIZATIONS AND HAS  
BEGUN THE PROCESS WHICH WILL CULMINATE IN THE APRIL REFERENDUM.  
(NOTE: THIS REFERS TO THE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED 1 APRIL SELECTION  
OF DELEGATES TO THE PLN NOMINATING CONVENTION. NO DATE FOR  
CONVENTION YET ANNOUNCED. END NOTE). RECRUITMENT OF NEW CADRES  
TO REPLACE OLD AND NO LONGER ACTIVE LEADERSHIP IS UNDERWAY.

ACCORDING TO ARGENAL PAPI, ONE PROBLEM IS THAT, IF THE PLN IS NOT ACTIVE, IT CAN BE DEFEATED IN THE COMING ELECTION. SOMOZA HAS BEEN "TOO ARROGANT AND DICTATORIAL AND HAS LOST TOUCH WITH THE PEOPLE." USG SHOULD INFLUENCE HIM TO REALIZE:

A) A SOLID CANDIDATE (SUCH AS FORMIN QUINTANA) MUST BE SELECTED, AS THE PLAN CANNOT WIN WITH CANDIDATES LACKING STATURE (I.E., MINGOV MORA AND NATIONAL DISTRICT MINISTER MONTENEGRO), B) SOMOZA CANNOT MAINTAIN FAMILY CONTROL OF THE GN--HIS SON IS FEARED AND IS A SERIOUS LIABILITY FOR THE PARTY, C) SOMOZA CONTINUISMO CANNOT BE ASSOCIATED WITH PLN, BUT NEITHER SHOULD HE RESIGN AS CHAOS WOULD RESULT. IF SOMOZA LEAVES UNDER PRESSURE (E.G., NOT VOLUNTARILY LEAVING A POPULARLY ELECTED SUCCESSOR), THE PLN COULD NOT WITHSTAND THE PRESSURE. END CONFIDENTIAL

BEGIN SECRET.

4. AMB HAS ALSO MET WITH DANILO AGUIRRE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF LA PRENSA. THE AMB DISCUSSED THE NUTRITION AND EDUCATION LOANS--EXPLAINING THEIR ORIGINS AND PURPOSES. HE STRESSED THAT OUR OBJECTIVE WAS NOT TO SUPPORT THE GON, ALTHOUGH SOMOZA ENCOURAGED WICH AN INTERPRETATION. THE AMB EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT, WHILE TREATING THE LOANS IN THE LIGHT OF NICARAGUA'S BEST INTERESTS, THE COVERAGE WOULD NOT DISTORT OUR NEUTRAL OBJECTIVES.

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5. AGRUIRRE AGREED, NOTING THAT THE LOANS ARE NOT POPULAR. AGREEING THAT LA PRENSA WAS VERY IMPORTANT IN FORMING PUBLIC OPINION, HE SAID THAT HOSTILE COVERAGE OF THE LOANS COULD DEMORALIZE THE OPPOSITION--CREATING THE IMPRESSION THAT THE USG STOOD AGAINST IT. AGRUIRRE HOPED THAT NOVEDADES AND/OR THE US PRESS WOULD NOT GENERATE CONTROVERSY SO THAT LA PRENSA COULD EMPLOY A LOW-KEYED APPROACH SIMILAR TO THAT USED IN COVERING PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER TO SOMOZA. AGRUIRRE OPINED THAT BECAUSE THE LETTER WAS NEVER PUBLISHED AND NOVEDADES COULD MAKE ONLY LIMITED CLAIMS, LA PRENSA WAS ABLE TO ACCORD IT MODERATE COVERAGE CONFINED TO WIRE SERVICE REPORTS AND DID NOT FEEL COMPELLED TO MAKE STRIDENT EDITORIAL COMMENT.

6. THE NEED FOR POLITICAL COMPROMISE WAS DISCUSSED. AGRUIRRE CITED THE BASIC PROBLEM AS BEING MUTUAL DISTRUST BETWEEN SOMAZA AND THE OPPOSITION. AGRUIRRE SAID THAT HE HAD INFLUENCED XAVIER CHAMORRO (DIRECTOR OF LA PRENSA) TO SUPPORT THE SABORIO INITIATIVE (REFTEL A). THE AMB OPINED THAT SABORIO'S INITIATIVE ONLY TREATED ONE INSTITUTION AND THE GON MIGHT FEAR THAT GIVING IN ON THIS ISSUE WITHOUT HAVING A TOTAL FRAMEWORK GUARANTEEING OPPOSITION COOPERATION IN AN OVERALL DEMOCRATIZATION PLAN

MIGHT CREAT PROBLEMS WITHIN THE GN WITHOUT YIELDING ANY SHORT-RUN GAINS. THE AMB ASKED IF AGUIREE WOULD BE WILLING TO MEET WITH A REPRESENTATIVE OF SOMOZA TO PRIVATELY DISCUSS AN OVERALL COMPROMISE NOT DEMANDING SOMOZA'S IMMEDIATE RESIGNATION WHILE, AT THE SAME TIME, PROVIDING GUARANTEES OF SOMOZA'S ULTIMATE WITHDRAWAL IN CONJUNCTION WITH AN ELECTION.

7. AQUIRRE SAW THREE CRITICAL AREAS: A) THE GN, B) ELECTORAL REFORM, C) AMNESTY. HE SAID HE WOULD CONSULT CHAMORRO AND WAS PREPARED TO MEET WITH GON IF ANY POSSIBILITY OF COMPROMISE PRESENTED ITSELF. ACCORDING TO HIM, THE DIFFICULTY IS THAT THE OPPOSITION IS STILL DIVIDED, WITH EACH FACTION HAVING ITS OWN AXE TO GRIND. HOWEVER, HE OPINED THAT LA PRENSA'S ROLE IS CRUCIAL AND A SOMOZA-LA PRENSA UNDERSTANDING IS VITAL  
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FOR A PEACEFUL SOLUTION. HE STATED THAT A MILITARY REGIME MIGHT BE WORSE THAN THE CURRENT GON BECAUSE THE GN WAS UNPROFESSIONAL AND MIGHT DISINTEGRATE, AND AN FSLN VICTORY WOULD BE A DISASTER.  
END SECRET.

BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL.

8. AMB WAS ALSO INVITED TO A DINNER GIVEN IN HIS HONOR BY RAMIRO SACASA GUIERRO THE LIBERAL CONSTITUTIONALIST MOVEMENT (MLC). SACASA STRESSED TO AMB HIS CONCERN ABOUT VIOLENCE REFERRING TO HIS PUBLIC STATEMENT OF 30 JULY (REFTEL D) TO THE EFFECT THAT GON MUST "COMPLY WITH OPPOSITION DEMANDS, AND FORMULATE A SPECIFIC PLAN FOR DEMOCRATICIZATION". THESE DEMANDS ARE INTER ALIA; A) THAT JOSE R. SOMOZA AND MAJOR ANASTASIO SOMOZA PORTOCARRERO BE RELIEVED OF THEIR COMMANDS, B) THAT A NEW NON-SOMOZA FAMILY MEMBER BE NAMED CHIEF DIRECTOR OF THE GN, C) CHANGES IN ELECTORAL LAW TO ESTABLISH EQUAL REPRESENTATION IN ELECTORAL TRIBUNALS FOR ALL POLITICAL PARTIES, D) AMNESTY.

NOTE BY OC/T: TELEGRAM DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION.

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PM-05 NSC-05

SP-02 SS-15 DODE-00 L-03 EB-08 HA-05 PA-01 /069 W

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AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

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9. SACASA ASKED THE AMB IF THE USG MIGHT BE ABLE TO INFLUENCE SOMOZA, HIS THESIS BEING THAT IF SOMOZA WERE TO ACCEDE TO THESE PUBLICLY-MADE DEMANDS, A NEGOTIATED COMPROMISE FORMULA MIGHT BE POSSIBLE. THE AMB TOLD SACASA THAT HIS INSTRUCTIONS WERE TO TELL ALL GROUPS WITH WHICH HE HAD CONTACT, THAT THE USG FAVORS THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF NICARAGUA AND, CLEARLY, WE HOPE FOR A PEACEFUL DEMOCRATIC SOLUTION HERE. THE AMB STRESSED THAT HE WAS NOT AUTHORIZED TO PROPOSE A SPECIFIC PLAN TO SOMOZA.

COMMENTS: AFTER A PERIOD INTIMATELY LINKED TO THE RETURN OF "TWELVE" ---CHARACTERIZED BY POLITICAL HYPER-ACTIVITY AND POLARIZATION (SUSTAINED MILITANCY OF THE PRESS, CONTINUING DEMONSTRATIONS, STRIKES, FSLN ACTIVITY)-- WHICH BASED ON CONVERSATIONS WITH SOME OPPOSITION LEADERS, EMB CONSIDERED TO BE THE RESULT OF A MAJOR PUSH TO OVERTHROW SOMOZA, SOMOZA, THERE HAS BEEN A LULL IN ACTIVITY FOR THE LAST FEW DAYS. EMB HAS OBSERVED GREATER INTEREST ON THE PART OF A FEW OPPOSITION LEADERS TO SEEK A COMPROMISE AND ENGAGE IN SOME FORM OF NEGOTIATION--ESPECIALLY IF SOMOZA WILL MAKE SOME PRIOR CONCESSIONS. AS THIS OCCURS, THE GON IS TAKING A HARDER LINE, MARSHALLING ITS OWN FORCES AND NOT ACCOMMODATING OPPOSITION INITIATIVES INCLUDING THOSE OF THE CHURCH (REFTELS B AND C) AND RAMIRO  
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SACASA (REFTEL D). ON THE OTHER HAND, A PLAN FOR A GENERAL STRIKE TO OUST SOMOZA, PLANNED FOR NEXT WEEK (SEPTTEL), HAS BEEN INITIATED IN THE PROVINCES AND IS RUMORED TO BE GATHERING STRENGTH IN MANAGUA. EMB NOTES THAT SOMOZA HAS YET TO IMPLEMENT THE INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS OF GN AND ELECTORAL SYSTEMS WHICH AMB DISCUSSED WITH SOMOZA IN JANUARY (REFTELS E AND F).  
SOLAUN

NOTE BY OC/T: TELEGRAM DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION.

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 18 aug 1978  
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**TAGS:** PINS, NU, US, (SOLAUN, MAURICIO)  
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